Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

March 25, 2011

The Honorable Julius Genachowski Chairman Federal Communications Commission 445 12th Street, SW Washington, DC 20554

Who perhaps

Dear Chairmáit Genachowski:

We write to you concerning the current need for affordable high capacity broadband services in the seven counties that comprise the Brazos Valley in Central Texas. Today health care providers in these rural communities do not have access to adequate and affordable high-capacity services necessary to deliver cost effective, quality health care to the rural and low-income residents of the area. With six separate Local Access and Transport Areas (LATA) boundaries dividing the region, both a lack of competitive pricing and a shortage of high-capacity services among existing rural carriers leave our health care providers and their patients in this area without access to state-of-the art diagnostic tools available at medical centers located in more urban centers of the state.

We understand the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) recently proposed reforms to the universal service health care support mechanism which includes a health infrastructure program to fund up to 85 percent of the eligible costs for the design, construction and deployment of dedicated broadband networks that connect non-profit health care providers in areas of the country where the existing broadband infrastructure is inadequate. We believe a properly designed and administered health infrastructure program, as proposed by the Commission, offers the most cost-effective way of bringing telemedicine benefits to the Brazos Valley.

The Brazos Valley Council of Governments has already created a non-profit entity, Brazos 2020 Vision, with the goal of providing affordable connections to health care facilities in the area. The Commission's proposed health infrastructure program will allow for a one-time investment to fund the construction of the Brazos 2020 Vision broadband health network through a competitive bidding process open to all, rather than rely on perpetual universal service subsidies to existing providers which has contributed to the increasing cost of the Universal Service Fund. For this reason, and in light of the critical health care needs of our rural areas, we strongly support the Commission's proposed health infrastructure funding.

Implementing the proposed health infrastructure program will provide our Brazos Valley Council of Governments the opportunity to move ahead with its plans to build high-speed, high capacity network between our hospitals, rural clinics, emergency medical services, nursing schools and other medical facilities. High speed connections between our rural health care

facilities will provide our rural residents access to cutting-edge medical technology that will deliver significant improvements to patient care, while also enabling the Brazos Valley to fully implement next generation 911, electronic health record requirements and other IP-based emergency technologies. Eventually, the investment made to deploy these networks will lead to increased broadband availability throughout our broader rural communities.

As the Commission considers the final components of its new Rural Health Care Program, we urge it be mindful of the infrastructure needs of our rural communities by including the health infrastructure program as proposed in its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

Sincerely,

Rep. Bill Flores

Rep. Joe Barlot

Rep. Michael McCaul

Reo. John Carter

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2011

The Honorable Michael McCaul U.S. House of Representatives 131 Cannon House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McCaul:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to reform the federal universal service rural health care support mechanism. I appreciate your specific recommendation to adopt a health care infrastructure program that will allow a one-time investment in projects such as Brazos 2020 Vision.

The Commission is committed to the goal of providing the important benefits of the rural health care program to eligible health care providers. The Commission is considering a proposed infrastructure along with a variety of other reforms proposed in the Commission's July 2010 Rural Health Care *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*. The Commission staff is reviewing the comments related to the proposed reforms to the rural health care program; a copy of your letter has been entered into the record of that proceeding. The Commission will give careful consideration to all of the comments as it moves forward.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Julius Genachowski

COMMISSION

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI

CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2011

The Honorable Bill Flores U.S. House of Representatives 1505 Longworth House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Flores:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to reform the federal universal service rural health care support mechanism. I appreciate your specific recommendation to adopt a health care infrastructure program that will allow a one-time investment in projects such as Brazos 2020 Vision.

The Commission is committed to the goal of providing the important benefits of the rural health care program to eligible health care providers. The Commission is considering a proposed infrastructure along with a variety of other reforms proposed in the Commission's July 2010 Rural Health Care *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*. The Commission staff is reviewing the comments related to the proposed reforms to the rural health care program; a copy of your letter has been entered into the record of that proceeding. The Commission will give careful consideration to all of the comments as it moves forward.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Julius Genachowski

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION



June 14, 2011

The Honorable John R. Carter U.S. House of Representatives 409 Cannon House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Carter:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to reform the federal universal service rural health care support mechanism. I appreciate your specific recommendation to adopt a health care infrastructure program that will allow a one-time investment in projects such as Brazos 2020 Vision.

The Commission is committed to the goal of providing the important benefits of the rural health care program to eligible health care providers. The Commission is considering a proposed infrastructure along with a variety of other reforms proposed in the Commission's July 2010 Rural Health Care *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*. The Commission staff is reviewing the comments related to the proposed reforms to the rural health care program; a copy of your letter has been entered into the record of that proceeding. The Commission will give careful consideration to all of the comments as it moves forward.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely.

Julius Genachowski

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION



June 14, 2011

The Honorable Joe Barton U.S. House of Representatives 2109 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Barton:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to reform the federal universal service rural health care support mechanism. I appreciate your specific recommendation to adopt a health care infrastructure program that will allow a one-time investment in projects such as Brazos 2020 Vision.

The Commission is committed to the goal of providing the important benefits of the rural health care program to eligible health care providers. The Commission is considering a proposed infrastructure along with a variety of other reforms proposed in the Commission's July 2010 Rural Health Care *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*. The Commission staff is reviewing the comments related to the proposed reforms to the rural health care program; a copy of your letter has been entered into the record of that proceeding. The Commission will give careful consideration to all of the comments as it moves forward.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Julius Genachowski